With a Team, You're Never Alone: Promoting Recovery Through PDP

The PDP Team

The Delaware State Police have collaborated with the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to offer prompt and personal services for individuals experiencing mental health crises or substance abuse disorders. The three agencies developed a partnership and a program called the **Delaware Police Diversion Program** (PDP), which provides real-time intervention and

diversion from the criminal justice system.

The program's goals are to (1) provide access to recovery services for those with substance abuse disorders in order to decrease overdose fatalities; (2) provide immediate intervention services for those experiencing a mental health crisis; and (3) provide arrest diversion from the criminal justice system by participating in recovery mediation, leading to decreases in recidivism, calls for service, and drug-related crimes. When interacting with people who suffer from substance abuse or mental health disorders, sworn officers are now utilizing care managers, peers, and/or crisis intervention services to divert individuals from the criminal justice system. The program is not intended to hinder enforcement of the law but rather to seek alternatives to arrest when appropriate. The PDP facilitates the diversion of these individuals from the criminal justice system and into treatment, which is monitored and managed by DSAMH.

The PDP leadership team began its initial research into these intervention services in 2019. There was incremental implementation of the PDP program in 2020, and by 2022 it was fully implemented statewide. DSAMH care managers and peers were physically placed at DSP facilities so they could partner with troopers and offer immediate co-responder responses and services to the public. This partnership allows for timely follow-up services to be provided, such as additional education and treatment options. The program's final phase focuses on arrest diversion, which coincides with specific criteria and processes aligned with court rulings and national best practices. In February 2022, the program was fully operational throughout Delaware, and it began offering these resources to every Delaware law enforcement agency that requests services.

As the PDP continues to evolve, the initial results have been astounding. Since the start of the program, Delaware State Police have made more than 1,200 referrals to DSAMH. As of

June 2022, DSAMH care managers have contacted 631 referred individuals, with 236 accepting enrollments into the program (37% acceptance rate) and 187 (79%) admitted for further treatment. This exceeds the national acceptance rates of similar diversion programs by approximately 11%. The collaboration among these agencies has led to a program that positively impacts the lives of Delaware residents and visitors.

In May 2022, the PDP leadership team received the 2021 Governor's Team Excellence & GEAR-P3 Innovation & Efficiency Award.

"*We've advocated for law enforcement diversion programs for years because the justice system cannot be one-size-fits-all*," said Attorney General Jennings. "*Behavioral health is an unavoidable part of the criminal justice landscape, to say nothing of the addiction epidemic's impact on non-violent, low-level crime. In these cases, the best guarantee of long-term success – and the best guard against recidivism – can often be diversion, treatment, and recovery for eligible offenders. I'm proud that DOJ is a part of this partnership and applaud DSP and DSAMH for their commitment to this work*."

"*This partnership with State Police and Department of Justice and DELJIS allows us to provide clinical and peer support services to people who are struggling with addiction. We often talk about wanting to ensure there is 'no wrong door' for people who need clinical services- and this program partnership is another way to meet people where they are and offer them treatment when they come into contact with law enforcement. The success rates so far indicate that many people are willing to 'walk through the door' when it's offered and choose treatment,*" said DSAMH Director Joanna Champney.

"*The boundless dedication among all involved in the program's creation and implementation demonstrate our shared mission of*

compassion and safety for all residents and visitors to Delaware. We are look forward to continuing this innovative work with our partner agencies and encourage any individual who wants information about the program to call or respond to any DSP Troop," said Superintendent of the Delaware State Police Melissa A. Zebley.

The Delaware Police Diversion Program will continue to be utilized throughout the State of Delaware. Through its use, the Delaware State Police expect a lasting reduction in crime, overdoses, and mental health crises.

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Presented by Public Information Officer, Senior Corporal Leonard DeMalto

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